

PACIFICATION

x322

~~p.127~~ NSS p.123

It is extremely difficult to measure changes in the security situation within Vietnam over time with any degree of precision.

The initiation of bombing of the North and the introduction of US troops in 1965 served to stabilize but not to reverse the rural security equilibrium by end-1965.

Security, though subject to occasional relapses such as occurred at Tet in February 1968, has generally improved since its nadir in 1965 required the introduction of American combat troops. However, detailed studies of some key provinces indicate that, though statistics may show increases in the secure population for a given area, these changes often result from simple population movement and government held hamlets or towns, the over-all geographic pattern of security in the countryside appears to ~~have~~ have remained generally the same.

p. 124

However, there are a number of problems with these statistics. (HES, Hamlet Evaluation System) Critics of the current means of compilation of the statistics have pointed, among other things, to HES reliance on GVN sources, the pressure to show progress exerted on local advisors by upper echelons, the lack of ability to verify much information, and the limited training given evaluators.

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NSS p 124

Indeed, some studies have found that, if the indicators of the level of VC ~~and~~ military and political operations were considered in isolation from the remaining HES statistics, one could in fact conclude that very little progress ~~a~~ has been made in the past two years.

The key element in what progress has occurred has been the US military presence....
.....The essential first step toward pacification is security; the preservation and extension of the pacified areas, however, depends on the ability of the GVN to establish an effective political structure at the local level capable of responding to and eliciting the support of the people. The GVN has made only limited progress.....

The regression ~~in~~ in pacification statistics in February 1968 occasioned by the Communist Tet offensive revealed the fragility of the progress that had been previously portrayed.

p. 126

A resumption of enemy activity against these fragile gains could reverse progress once again, although at the risk of considerable enemy manpower loss.

probably

.....we should/expect neither spectacular nor significant breakthroughs in the countryside over the next year or two. Three reasons:

1/ Rural population is generally apathetic; 2/ pacification inherently a slow process; 3/..the VC still have considerable residual power to threaten and attack pacified areas, although they are unlikely to be able to regain the position of strength they held ~~xxx~~ in 1964-1966

PACIFICATION p/131 NSS

The majority of the South Vietnamese leaders, including President Thieu, have been chronically indifferent to the American ideas of pacification and skeptical of its claims of success

p.132

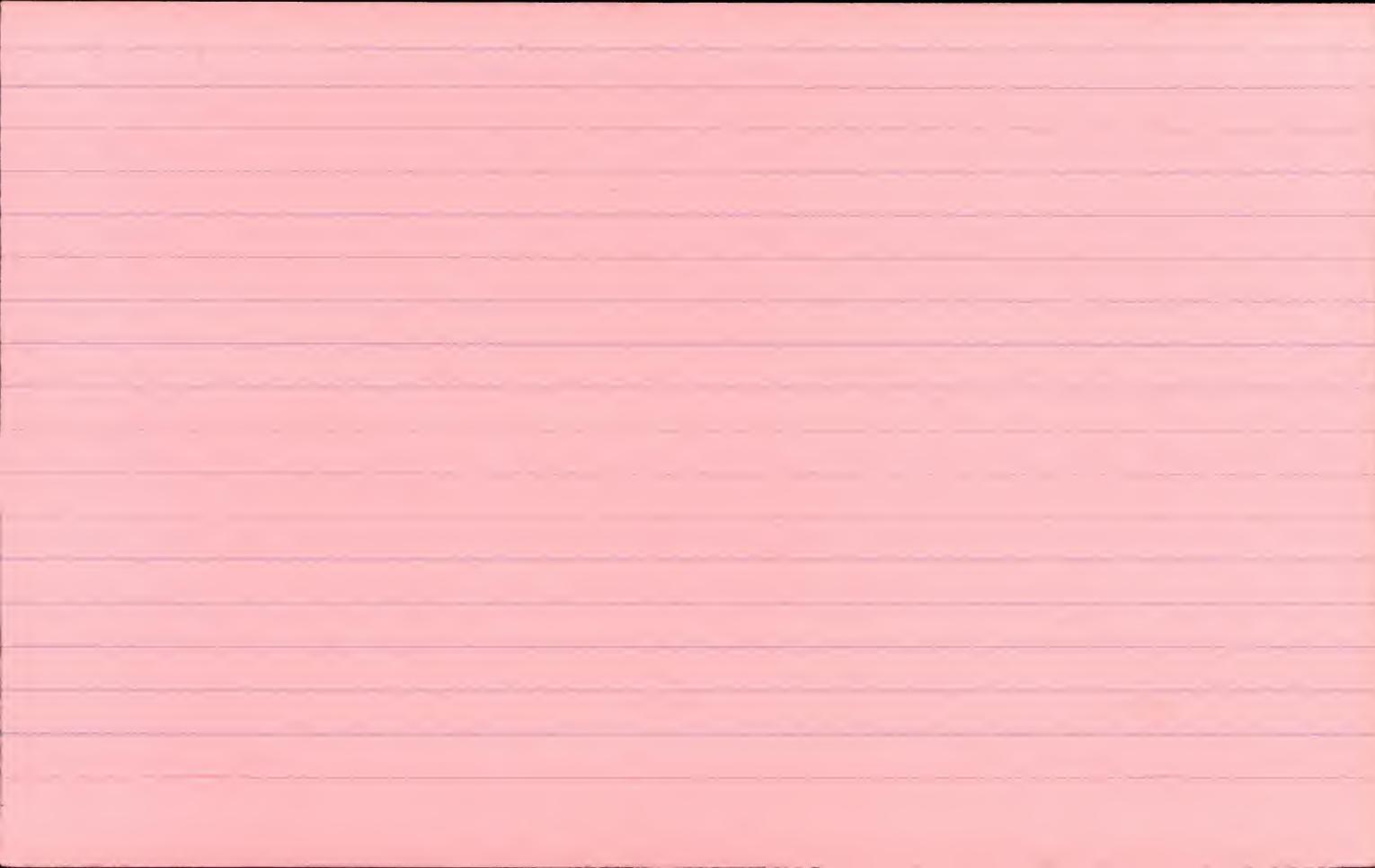
Pacification has thus far failed to give the peasant sufficient confidence in the GVN's ability to maintain security, or, in the longer run, to redress basic economic, political, and social inequalities.

In short, the problems hampering pacification over the years do not appear to have been significantly reduced. We believe that pacification program ~~xxxxx~~ is as vulnerable today as it was prior to the Communist 1968 Tet offensive.

PACIFICATION NSS

p.137 "Our best estimate is that the VC have a significant effect on at least two-thirds of the rural population."

p. 138 "Furthermore, while the infrastructure in several provinces may have been seriously impaired, any adverse impact throughout the vast majority of the provinces does not appear to be significant"



PACIFICATION NSS Memo #1 P 157

....the 1968 Tet offensive administered a powerful shock to the population and a major set-back to the pacification program, but at the same time it produced a widespread upsurge of national feeling and a greater willingness by many people to cooperate with the GVN. However, the intensity of these sentiments has clearly levelled off during~~xxxxxx~~ the past several months.

In regard to specific U.S. actions to encourage mobilization of political support for the GVN, it is clear that anti-GVN elements such as the An Quang Buddhists are hoping for U.S. help in replacing the GVN with one more to their liking. They obviously feel that their demand for a "peace government" will appeal to U.S. and other external opinion and may encourage action to upset Thieu and Ky. This in turn has encouraged "fence-sitting" among

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the uncommitted political elements, many of whom would probably support the GVN if it were perfectly clear to them that the U.S. had no intention of pressuring Thieu and Ky into personally unacceptable political concessions or into stepping aside. Statements of reassurance by U.S. leaders and officials at all appropriate levels, which are in any case periodically needed by GVN leaders would help discourage this "fence-sitting" tendency.

It must be recognized that short of actively moving for the replacement of Thieu & Ky, nothing the U.S. can say or do would satisfy such strongly anti-GVN groups as the An Quang Buddhists. Even if this were done, these extreme groups would then demand a wholesale purge which the U.S. would find totally ~~unacceptable~~ unacceptable. The result would likely be a "right-wing" reaction involving far more repression of these groups than anything undertaken or contemplated by the present GVN.

Pacification

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With respect to pacification, while there has been some progress, the situation is not as favorable to the GVN as some believe. The recent Special NIE on this subject concludes that:

a. the pacification program as a whole has made a sig contribution to the prosecution of the war & strengthened the pol position of the GVN vis-a-vis the Coms. Thus far the GVN's principal success has been in expanding its presence into the countryside. Providing permanent security for these gains has been more difficult. Security conditions continue to fluctuate with the intensity of combat. Low level terrorism, pol. agitation, & propaganda efforts by the VC continue to hamper progress, particularly since no more than a promising start has been made in reducing the effectiveness of the VC infrastructure. A large part of the countryside is still contested & subject to the continuing control of neither side.

PACIFICATION p. 339 ~~XXXX~~ OSD

paraphrased

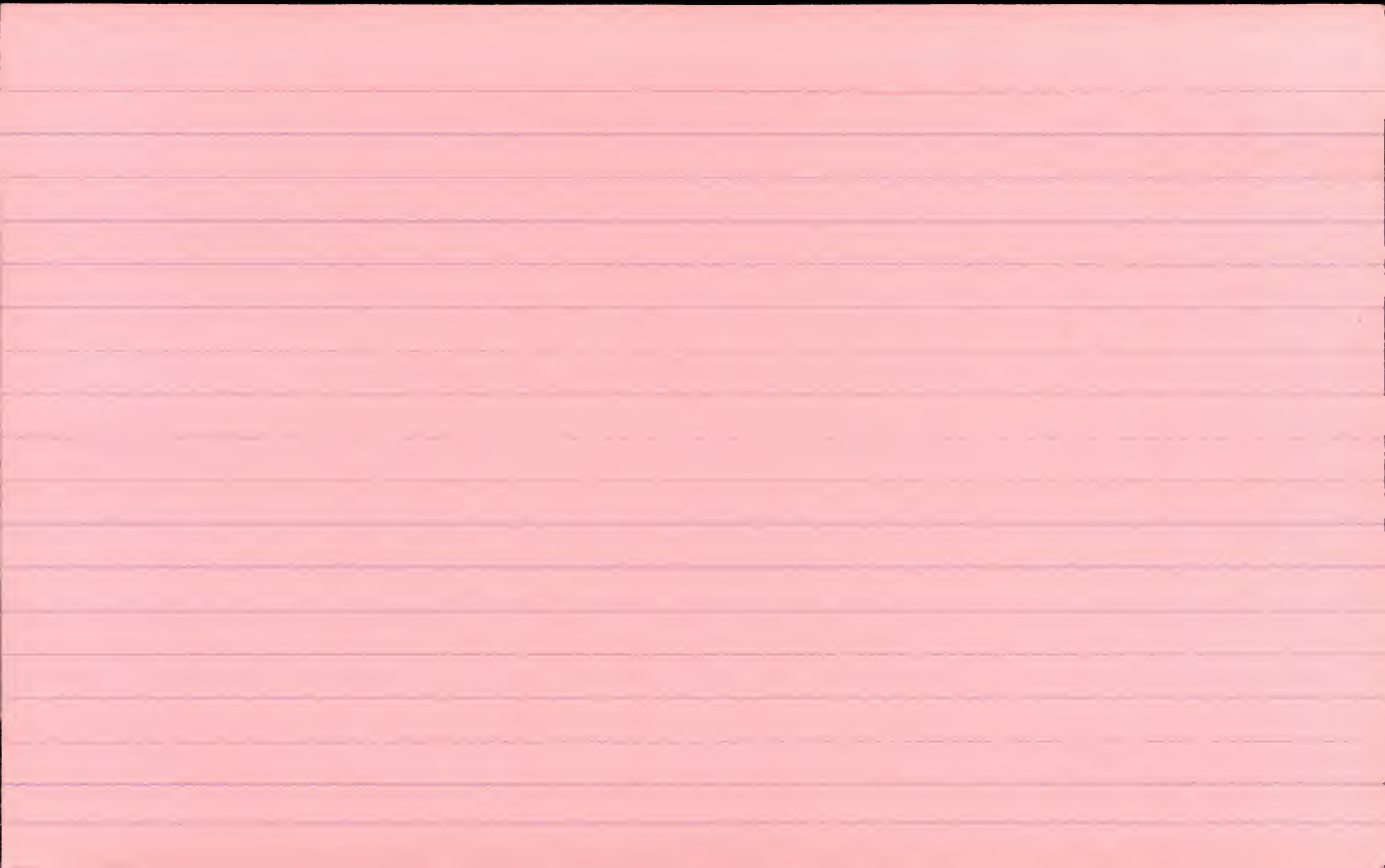
GVN now (1/69) inadequate for political confrontation. Divided. Uninspired. No political organization.

Some pacification progress, but not favorable to GVN.

NIE: Large part of countryside still contested & subject to continuing control of neither side.

p.340 NIE: Continued war weariness and apathy of peasants.

"How much time left for Pacification?" NIE: Over next months GVN not able to cope with VC any more than today. "Only very slow and uncertain progress." Due to Com reaction and attempts to retard.



why in Laos - VC Strength

352-353

At present the major threat to allied objectives in SVN is the enemy's effort to extend his political control over the population & claim a facade of legitimacy for his authority. It is estimated that the enemy has established "liberation committees" in over half of the villages in SVN, & over 60% of the population could be said to live in areas subject to some VC political activity. In support of this effort, enemy military capabilities are sig. and he still is capable of maintaining the military initiative. It is estimated that the total enemy mil strength committed against or posing a threat to US SVN is 265,000 - 355,000.

ARVN & Pacification

381

Despite the emphasis on pacification, most RVNAF leaders neither understand it nor support it. The pacification task has been given to RF & PF who have been inadequate. Plans call for continued shift of pacification to RF/PF; despite ~~continued~~ improvements in these forces, without regular force backup, they are likely to remain inadequate by themselves.

RVNAF has been unable to relate to the population and is neither a politically unifying nor modernizing force. Both RVNAF & the civil populace regard each other as "outsiders"; there has been little change in RVNAF conduct towards the populace.

... the security situation & the balance of influence in the countryside have not appreciably altered over time: the GVN aligned population was about 5,000,000 in 1962 & remains about that in 1968. & the VC population was approx. 2,600,000 in 1962 & ~~is~~ is approx. 2,200,000 today. In the remainder of the population (7-10 mil.) 2 phenomena seemed to have happened over time: (1) many indiv. (perhaps up to 2-3 mil.) have abandoned the rural areas & moved either into or ~~at~~ nearby the urban areas; (2) 5-7 mil. have wandered back & forth from GVN influence to VC influence dependent upon who was placing the greatest pressure upon them to conform at any given movement.

... (1) that pop. goes up in secure areas not because the people are committing themselves to the GVN particularly but because they want to get out of the fighting in rural areas

... the GVN can claim to have built up a reasonable internal security apparatus with some degree of popular participation in areas which contain about 68% of the pop. At the same time, the data tends to show that the VC can claim an active infrastructure operating in areas which have about 62% of the pop. There is an overlap of about 30% & bet 1967 & 1968 both sides increased their apparatus by 3-4%.

-- The tax collection data shows that the GVN collects taxes from about 75% of the population while the VC collect them from about 53%. At least 28% pay taxes to both sides.

--...the balance of influence in the countryside has not been tipped strongly in favor of either the GVN or the VC; further, the indication is that there has not been great change over the past 2 years.

- summary 427-428 — 436-38

Pae. a GVN - Thieu

431

the GVN is stronger & more stable than in the past years. It has a freely elected, constitutional gov. which is slowly becoming more responsive to the aspirations of the people.

Pacification -

438-439

goals for 1969 - & feasibility

33,000 VCI ~~eliminated~~ eliminated in 1969? - not possible to attain

GVN align 107 villages per month for total of 1280 - unlikely

training 42,00 village & hamlet officials - very unlikely

PSDF - forces possible

Chieu Hoi - no

441 -
summary of OSD

Pacification - VCI

457-58

... while there has been improvement in our efforts to "root out" the infrastructure & further improvements are expected during 1969, there are inherent difficulties in the target, the org. & the methodology of the P110EN12-P110N6 H011N6 program which make a dramatic improvement in the program unlikely. Further, the vast effect that seeming progress in reaching a settlement in Paris could have on the program's execution makes predictions of greater success during 1969 highly conjectural. Additionally, results to date & predicted over the next year do not support the contention that the program, within that time frame, can have a lasting effect on the hard-core apparatus.

Victory - Pacific area

5.3

OSD

--- "Victory" in the military sense would be the reduction of the military capabilities of the VC to the level where it could be dealt with through SVN as normal police operations & criminal disturbers of the peace.